

I agree with the claim that the Bell companies operate an "essential facility", and should have to accommodate other ISP firms that wish to purchase access from them. This wholesale provisioning will stimulate competition and be of benefit to the consumers. To not do so would cripple the '96 Telecom Act. Please consider my reasons as follows:

Chairman Powell, please consider that 80% of all new job creation in this country comes from small business. That, despite the competitive disadvantages, which small businesses face in their struggle to find viable business models with which to compete with multi-national corporations. The interests of large corporations often do not coincide with the interests of the citizens of the United States. Whereas, the small business entrepreneur is often much closer to the social fabric of this great nation. The competitive pressure of "small" business often ensures higher quality and greater innovation on the part of large corporations, whose market position allows volume cost/price advantages. Large corporations often have a vested interest in "sitting" on new - and superior - technologies and services, by unfair litigation, buy-outs, and other anti-competitive strategies. Microsoft comes to mind.

Only a crusty few are now bemoaning the deregulation of the old phone monopoly. While the transition to competitive telecommunications has been painful at times - mostly because of regulatory and judicial mistakes, there is no doubt about the ferocious speed at which, new, superior, and less expensive data and telecommunications technologies came on line after the break-up of AT&T. By some estimates, the break-up of AT&T has generated several TRILLION dollars of new economy since 1984: that means jobs, secondary economic benefits and a larger tax base. Let's keep that regulatory philosophy intact. Free market competition, along with the enlightened observance and legal enforcement of contracts - while it may produce uneven results in the short term - is, in the long run, the most efficient economic engine